Business: State unemployment checks, each with $600 extra from the federal government, are being distributed. A9

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CORONAVIRUS FALLOUT

EYEING AN END TO THE LOCKDOWN

State officials begin conversation about reopening businesses, but Newsom says mass gatherings 'not in the cards' when shelter-in-place order is lifted

By Kerry Crowley
Bay Area News Group

California Gov. Gavin Newsom outlined six criteria that will need to be met to lift the statewide shelter-in-place order aimed at stopping the spread of the novel coronavirus.

During a news briefing Tuesday, Newsom indicated there is no specific timeline for modifying restrictions but said Californians should not expect a return to "normal" life until there is herd immunity and a vaccine exists for COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus.

The state is exploring ways businesses and schools can reopen in a safe and responsible manner, but the governor indicated mass gatherings such as sporting events and concerts will not be permitted to take place in the near future.

"The prospect of mass gatherings is negligible at best until we get to herd immunity and we get to a vaccine," Newsom said. "So large-scale events that bring in hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands of strangers all together across every conceivable difference, health and otherwise, is not in the cards based upon our current guidelines and current expectations."

California is coordinating its efforts with Washington and Oregon, and Newsom suggested other Western states would join that effort.

A similar coalition has taken shape in the Northeast, encompassing Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

"The house is still on fire," New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy said Tuesday. "We still have to put the fire out" but also "make sure this doesn't reignite."

Politicians and public health authorities alike warned that easing restrictions in the U.S. and Europe will have to be accompanied by widespread antibody testing to see who might be immune and ramped-up tracing of infected people's contacts with others. That could well entail the use of smartphone technology.

NEWSOM » PAGE 8

CALIFORNIA'S SIX INDICATORS FOR MODIFYING THE STAY-AT-HOME ORDER:

1. The ability to monitor and protect our communities through testing, contact tracing, isolating and supporting those who are positive or exposed.
2. The ability to prevent infection in people who are at risk for more severe COVID-19.
3. The ability of the hospital and health systems to handle surges.
4. The ability to develop therapeutics to meet the demand.
5. The ability for businesses, schools, and child care facilities to support physical distancing.
6. The ability to determine when to reinstitute certain measures, such as the stay-at-home orders, if necessary.

ABOVE: California Gov. Gavin Newsom discusses an outline for what it will take to lift coronavirus restrictions Tuesday at the Governor's Office of Emergency Services in Rancho Cordova.
RICH PEDRONCELLI — POOL

CORONAVIRUS

Churches file lawsuit to continue services

State's stay-at-home order unfairly targets religious gatherings, they argue

From staff and wire reports

Three Southern California churches that want to keep their doors open during the coronavirus outbreak sued Gov. Gavin Newsom and other officials on Monday, arguing that restrictions on public gatherings, including worship services, violate the First Amendment right to freedom of religion and assembly.

The suit, filed in the federal court for the Central District of California, also names state Attorney General Xavier Becerra and officials of Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

It seeks to block Newsom's stay-at-home order and two county orders designed to slow the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, by having people mostly stay at home, closing businesses except for those deemed essential and barring group gatherings. The

CHURCHES » PAGE 7

ELECTION 2020

Obama's Biden endorsement is culmination of stealth role

By Glenn Thrush
The New York Times

Over the past year, Joe Biden and former President Barack Obama practiced a political distancing of sorts, with Obama maintaining a posture of public neutrality in the Democratic primaries, offering counsel to any candidate who called (most did), and Biden saying he wanted to win on his own.

Biden

But with calibrated stealth, Obama has been considerably more engaged in the campaign's denouement than has been previously revealed, even before he endorsed Biden on Tuesday.

For months, Obama had kept in close contact with senior party officials, in hopes of preventing a

BIDEN » PAGE 7

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ERs experience dramatic decline in visits

By Joe Nelson
jnelson@scng.com
@GumshoeJoe on Twitter

In the weeks following Gov. Gavin Newsom's March 19 stay-at-home order to curb the spread of the coronavirus, Dr. Brian Anderson noticed an unusual phenomenon at the eight emergency rooms he manages: a sharp decline in patient visits.

"The volume has dropped as much as 50% in many of our ERs," Anderson said. "We've never seen declines like this. It has caught most by surprise."

Like many emergency room doctors and nurses across Southern California, Anderson believes the reason for declining ER visits is mainly twofold: strict public adherence to the government's stay-at-home directive and fear of contracting the potentially deadly COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus.

But the dramatic drop in overall ER visits is only part of the story of how COVID-19 is disrupting operations at medical facilities throughout Southern California.

ER » PAGE 8

Dr. Brian Anderson, left, Pam Allen, director of emergency services, and Dr. Evan Houck, medical director, at Redlands Community Hospital, in front of tents erected outside the emergency room for a possible influx of new patients in Redlands.
TERRY PIERSON
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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